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Descriptive material about the process of, and reasons for, dropping out of high school is presented in this working paper. The data were collected through personal interviews with 207 young male dropouts. This report is limited to univariate response distributions. The most frequently-mentioned type of reason for leaving school is one which refers to some aspect of the school environment and/or the school personnel. Many dropouts reported they received no encouragement from school officials to stay in school. Other findings include: (1) 62.8% of the boys dropped out by choice, (2) the decision is not thought about long in advance, (3) most current dropouts intend to return to school someday, (4) the decision is usually reached independently, (5) dropping out is not encouraged or supported by parents, siblings, or friends, and (6) most dropouts have specific plans for doing something while not attending school. (Author/KP)

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WORKING PAPER 4

WHY AND HOW YOUNG MEN DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL: SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Ilona D. Wirtanen
The University of Michigan
Institute for Social Research
Ann Arbor, Michigan

February 1969

SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Office of Education
Bureau of Research

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Office of Manpower Research

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PREFACE

The present working paper is the fourth in a series designed to report research carried out as part of the Youth in Transition project -- a nationwide longitudinal study of adolescent boys conducted by the Survey Research Center under the sponsorship of the United States Office of Education.* The working paper series is an integral part of the total publication program planned for the study, and should be viewed in that context.

Publication Plans. The publication program for the study involves three levels: working papers, research monographs, and books. The working paper series is designed to provide fairly immediate documentation and distribution of findings to sponsors and colleagues working in related fields. It is anticipated that the first form of publication for any major set of findings will be the working paper series.

The next level of publication, the research monograph series, is designed to communicate the scientific findings of the study to a broader professional audience. The research monographs will include much of the information first available in the working paper series, but will do so in a more polished and finished form. Some monographs will be adapted fairly directly from corresponding working papers; others may combine and integrate a number of working papers. It is intended that the research monograph series will eventually provide a complete and fully documented statement of the results of the research.

The third level of publication is expected to be one or more books summarizing and integrating many of the findings reported in the monograph series. It is important to note that this form of publication will not be merely a repetition or summarization of what is already presented in the research monograph series; rather, it is intended that the books based on the study will concentrate more heavily on summary conclusions and policy implications. The books will be, in a sense, secondary material building upon the primary analyses reported in fuller detail in the monographs; they will be more interpretative, less data-laden, and will cite the research monograph series in order to refer intensive readers to the source material.

The three levels of publication described above represent the major outlets contemplated for our findings. Additional means of communication will include occasional doctoral dissertations, journal articles, and papers and symposia presented from time to time. Some findings first published in these forms, especially doctoral dissertations, may eventually be included in the working paper and/or monograph series.

Working Paper Series. Given its purpose of documenting our work promptly and extensively, the working paper series is not subject to stringent editorial requirements; on the contrary, our primary emphasis is

*Partial support for the Spring, 1968 data collection of the Youth in Transition Project was provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Manpower Research.

upon getting things written soon after they happen, leaving the more complete and polished treatment for the monograph series. (An example of this process is the first working paper, produced in May of 1967; it was extensively revised and published as our first monograph at the end of 1967.) Our intention is to include a wide range of products in the working paper series, such as description of research design and procedures (Working Paper No. 1), reports of scores and response distributions (Working Paper No. 2 and the present Working Paper No. 4), and discussion and interpretation of findings (Working Paper No. 3 and other forthcoming Working Papers).

As noted earlier, the audience for the working paper series includes sponsors and colleagues working in closely related fields. Another very important audience includes our own project personnel. At this writing the project has been in operation for over three years; it is scheduled to continue for another three years, and it may well lead to further studies. It thus becomes important to provide continuity in purpose and knowledge of the project in the fact of inevitable changes in staff, and the Working Papers are one of the means of insuring such continuity.

Acknowledgments. Any project of the size and scope of the Youth in Transition study involves the collaborative effort of many people. Thanks are due to many staff members of the Institute for Social Research: the Sampling Section; the Field Section, including field supervisors and interviewers; the Coding Section; and the Computer Services Facility. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the work of our project staff, past and present:

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A final word of thanks is due to the 207 dropouts who agreed to continue their participation in our study, thus providing the data for this working paper.

Jerald G. Bachman
Robert L. Kahn
Principal Investigators

SUMMARY OF WORKING PAPER #4

This Working Paper is the fourth in a series designed to report research carried out as part of the Youth in Transition project -- a nationwide longitudinal study of adolescent boys conducted by the Survey Research Center under the sponsorship of the United States Office of Education. The paper presents descriptive material about the process of, and reasons for, dropping out of high school. The data were collected in the Spring of 1968 by means of personal interviews with 207 young men who have gone through the dropout experience. The present report is limited to univariate response distributions; extensive analyses relating this material to many other variables in the Youth in Transition Study are planned for some future time.*

Probably the single most significant conclusion drawn in this report is that the most frequently-mentioned type of reason for leaving school is one which refers to some aspect of the school environment and/or the school personnel. A second very interesting finding, related to the first, is that a great number of dropouts reported that they got no encouragement from school officials to stay in school.

Other important findings include: 62.8% of the boys in the sample dropped out of school by choice rather than being asked to leave; the decision to drop out of high school is not thought about for very long in advance; most current dropouts do have intentions to return to school someday; the decision to leave school is usually reached independently by the dropout himself; dropping out is not encouraged or supported by parents, siblings, friends, etc.; and most dropouts have specific plans for doing something while they are not attending school.

* The 207 dropouts had all participated in the Time 1 phase of our longitudinal study (18 months prior to the Spring, 1968 data collection). Thus, we have "base-line data" to relate to the self-reports upon which this Working Paper is based.

Chapter I:

Introduction and Methods

This Working Paper presents responses to an interview segment dealing with the process of dropping out of high school. The data reported here were collected in the Spring of 1968 from a subset of young men participating in our longitudinal study.[1] This subset included all young men in our second data collection (Spring, 1968) who had participated in our initial data collection (Fall, 1966) and who had dropped out of school sometime between the two data collections. Each such respondent was asked a series of questions especially designed for either "current dropouts" or "former dropouts" (boys who have been out of school for some extended period in the past but who have now returned to essentially full-time schooling). These current and former dropouts were the only respondents in the second data collection who were asked the questions described in this paper. The response distributions reported here are intended as a "first look" at why and how these young men dropped out of high school. Because this is a preliminary report on a limited set of respondents, very little interpretation of findings has been attempted. We will undertake extensive analyses of dropping out only after the final data collection in our longitudinal design (when our sample of dropouts will be much more complete).

The format of this paper is consistent with the purposes of our Working Paper Series; it is a multipurpose, "working" document. For example, response distributions are presented for every question in the dropout section of the interview, regardless of sub-sample size. In addition, code category numbers are included in all tables. Such procedures are sometimes irrelevant to any substantive interpretation of the present findings; however, we anticipate that they may facilitate our later more extensive analyses of these data.

Sample. The sample described in this Working Paper consists of 207 current or former dropouts who responded to the second wave of interviewing in our longitudinal design and who had also provided complete information at "Time 1". These 207 represent 9.4% of the total number of 2203 "Time 2" respondents.

As we explained in Youth in Transition, Volume 1[2], our sample of schools for the study is divided into two groups: a probability sample of 87 schools, and a much smaller set of "Discretionary Schools." (The Discretionary School sample has, since the time of the first data collection, been increased from 10 schools to 14; 4 schools which were originally in a special "Title I" sample have been added to the Discretionary Sample, while the remaining 3 "Title I" schools have been dropped from the study.) The following table indicates the number of dropouts (as of Spring, 1968) in each school sample:

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[1] For a complete description of the study, its design and purposes, see Bachman, J.G., Kahn, R.L., Mednick, M.T., Davidson, T.N., and Johnston, L.D. Youth in transition: volume I -- Blueprint for a longitudinal study of adolescent boys. Ann Arbor, Mich.; Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, 1967.

[2] Ibid.

Table A:

Distribution of Dropouts Among "Time 2" Respondents

School Sample	Number of "Time 2" Respondents	Number of Dropout Respondents	Percent Dropouts Among Respondents
Probability Sample	1886	171	9.07%
Discretionary Sample	317	36	11.36%
[Original Sample]	[258]	[20]	[7.75%]
[Title I]	[59]	[16]	[27.12%]
TOTALS FOR "TIME 2"	2203	207	9.40%

Incidentally, it is not surprising that the highest percentage of dropouts appears in the schools that were originally part of the Title I sample. These are schools geared to vocational education, especially for students from lower class backgrounds.

There are some obvious limitations in the dropout sub-sample treated in this paper. First, some young men drop out before tenth grade, and such early dropouts were not sampled in our original data collection in the Fall of 1966. Second, some young men will no doubt drop out between now and our next data collection, and their data of course are not reflected in the present report. (An update of this Working Paper is planned subsequent to the final data collection.) And third, dropouts who choose to discontinue their participation in our study (some have already made this choice and others can be expected to do so before the next data collection) impose a further systematic bias on our dropout subsample, and lead to an underestimation of dropout rates.

Some attempt has been made to compensate for the last limitation. In as many cases as possible, we have determined whether or not a non-respondent is a dropout. For the Spring, 1968 data collection, we had a total of 377 non-respondents (defined as a boy who responded at "Time 1" but not at "Time 2"). For 211 of these non-respondents, we were able to discover whether or not they were still enrolled in school. Of these 211, 105 had dropped out between "Time 1" and "Time 2." The "Time 1" data of these 105 young men can be used in our later analyses of certain background factors and the predictability of dropping out of high school; however, there will be no further treatment of these or any other non-respondents in this paper.

Distinction Between "Current" and "Former" Dropouts. As mentioned above, the dropout segment of the interview was designed to be administered to any young man who had been out of school for an extended period of time. It turned out that almost half of the 207 boys who completed this part of the interview were "former" dropouts -- i.e., they were back in school at the time they were interviewed. Quite a number of the former dropouts were out of school for only a week or less (see Table 15 for percentages). In future

analyses we will surely make distinctions between these various categories of dropouts, and often we may limit our treatment to those boys who left school permanently. However, there is no such distinction made in many of the univariate frequency distributions reported in the present Working Paper.

The reader will do well to bear in mind in particular that Tables 1 through 14 report findings from both current and former dropouts in roughly equal proportions. For example, most of those respondents who listed illness or suspension as reasons for having left school (see Table 1) are probably in the category of former dropouts. (Table 15 makes the distinction between current and former dropouts; Tables 16 through 22 at least partially reflect this distinction; and the questions for which response distributions are reported in Table 23 through 25 applied only to current dropouts.)

Data Collection Procedures. All "Time 2" data for the Youth in Transition Study were collected by means of a personal interview and a self-administered questionnaire. The interview schedule was a 72-page booklet; the administration time averaged a little less than one and one-half hours. The questionnaire was 60 pages in length and required a little over one hour to complete.

Most of the interviewing and questionnaire administration for the second stage took place in "neutral sites." (In a very few cases the administration had to take place in the schools, and in the first -- "Time 1" -- data collection the administration was in all cases conducted in the schools.) This procedure was deemed necessary because although most of the young men in our sample are still in school, some have dropped out and the school might have been, for them, an unpleasant or even "threatening" environment in which to be interviewed. (And, of course, we wanted as often as possible to interview all subjects in the same general type of setting in order to avoid possible situational effects.)

Both "Time 2" instruments -- the interview schedule and the questionnaire -- were generally very similar in design to the "Time 1" instruments.[3] The particular segment of the interview dealt with in this Working Paper -- the questions about dropout experiences -- was an exception. This section was a completely new addition at "Time 2." The dropout section appeared quite late in the interview -- it followed a series of questions about jobs and money matters (these questions were repeated from "Time 1") and preceded a section about Future Plans (a very similar future plans section appeared at "Time 1" but at that time immediately followed the questions about jobs and money matters).

Instrument Content. A replica of the dropout section of the interview schedule appears as Appendix A to this Working Paper. A brief summary of the substantive areas covered by the questions might be useful. The dropout segment began with a very general question about the circumstances under which

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[3] The "Time 1" instruments are presented in appendices to: Bachman, J.G., Kahn, R.L., Mednick, M.T., Davidson, T.N., and Johnston, L.D. Youth in transition: volume I -- Blueprint for a longitudinal study of adolescent boys. Ann Arbor, Mich.; Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, 1967.

the respondent left school. Each dropout was then asked when it was that he left school, and whether he left by choice or was asked to leave. A respondent who left by choice was asked a series of questions about when he started thinking about dropping out, his specific reasons for leaving, his plans to return to school, and the roles played by school officials in his plans to drop out and/or return. Any respondent who was asked to leave school was interviewed about why he was asked to leave, the roles played by school officials, his feelings toward dropping out by choice, and his plans to return to school. Following this investigation of the conditions surrounding his dropping out, each boy was asked how his parents, his siblings, and his friends felt about his dropping out, and whether any of these people were trying (or had tried) to persuade him to return to school.

Our intention was to design the dropout section so that respondents in different situations ("current dropouts" vs. "former dropouts"; boys who left by choice vs. boys who were asked to leave; etc.) could be asked questions which are analytically comparable but which were at the same time appropriately-worded for the specific situation.

Chapter II:

Results and Discussion

Reasons for Dropping Out

The first question in the dropout section of the interview was a very open-ended item about the respondent's reasons for leaving school. This somewhat "projective" approach permitted a respondent to tell us as much as he could on his own before being asked a series of specific questions. And in fact, when the frequencies in Table 1 are compared with response frequencies to similar, but direct, questions about the reasons for leaving school (see Table 7), it becomes clear that most subjects freely offered -- rather than waiting to be directly asked -- most of the information about their dropout experience.

Table 1

REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL (N=207)

F2. How did you happen to leave high school?
F2a. Can you tell me more about that?

	Frequencies			
	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.	4th Ment.
FAMILY				
11. Parents encouraged R to leave school and/or get a job		1	1	
12. Parents (family) needed money; R dropped out to help his family financially	3	3	1	
13. Parents don't care about what R does; poor family environment; family didn't encourage R	1	1	1	
14. R wanted to be independent of family		2		
15. Problems at home (other than 11 or 12); R was needed at home (other than financial)	6	2		
16. R was ill	10		1	
17. R ran away from home	2			
19. Other family reasons		1		
SUBTOTALS:	22	10	4	
FRIENDS				
22. R's friends encouraged him to leave school; R saw advantages that out-of-school kids have (money, free time, etc.)	1	1		
23. Kids in school avoided R, didn't like R; R couldn't get along with kids in school; R disliked the other students	1		2	

Table 1 cont.

		Frequencies			
		1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.	4th Ment.
25.	R got into some specific trouble with students in school	14	2		
28.	R got in with the wrong crowd	1	1		
29.	Other friends reasons	1			
	SUBTOTALS:	18	4	2	
PERSONAL REASONS					
31.	R felt disliked, looked down on (except by teachers or other students)	1			1
32.	R felt grown up; R felt he was a big shot; R thought it was smart to drop out	1			
33.	R preferred to be doing other things (except work)		3	3	
34.	R got discouraged; R lost hope; R didn't think he'd ever make it through	1	5		
35.	R had to get married; R got in trouble with a girl; R got married; R had to support own family	2	1		
36.	R didn't feel ambitious; R had no plans for the future		1	1	
37.	R didn't like the long hours			1	
39.	Other personal reasons		1	2	
	SUBTOTALS:	5	11	7	1
WORK AND FINANCIAL					
41.	R had to go to work; R needed money	2	1		
42.	R wanted to work; R more interested in work than in school; R preferred to be out working	8	10		
43.	R wanted to be working in order to make money	3	2		
44.	R wanted to be working in order to buy a car or motorcycle	3	1	1	
45.	R wanted to enlist in armed forces	4	1	1	
47.	R felt he would get better (more useful) training on the job; R wanted to learn a trade	1			
48.	Job Corps; Peace Corps; Vista	3			
	SUBTOTALS:	24	15	2	
SCHOOL REASONS					
50.	R had trouble learning; R got too many poor grades; subject failure; got behind in school work	9	8	3	
51.	Non-promotion; R got left back a grade		4	2	

Table 1 cont.

		Frequencies			
		1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.	4th Ment.
52.	R felt school didn't teach anything valuable; R felt school wasn't useful	3	4	1	
53.	R felt school didn't make use of his abilities		1		
54.	R couldn't take the classes he wanted	4		1	
55.	R didn't study; R was too lazy to do his school work	5	1		
56.	"Didn't like school in general"; R not interested in school, found school boring	31	4	1	
57.	R didn't like school activities		1		
58.	R was absent too much; R played "hooky"; R cut classes	13	12	3	1
59.	Other school reasons or problems	1			
	SUBTOTALS:	66	35	11	1
	AUTHORITY				
60.	R got into trouble with teachers, administrators, or counselors	24	16	3	
61.	Teachers didn't like R; R got no attention or encouragement from teachers; teachers picked on R		4		
62.	R couldn't get along with teachers; R disliked the teachers	7	9		
63.	Teachers thought R was dumb		1		
64.	R got blamed for things he didn't do	1	8		
65.	R thought that if he didn't drop out they would kick him out	4	1	2	1
66.	Authorities were too strict; school rules were too strict	1	3	1	
67.	R got in trouble with the law or other out-of-school authorities	4	2		
68.	R got expelled or suspended; R didn't drop out by choice	25	23	3	
69	Other authority reasons		1		
	SUBTOTALS:	66	68	9	1
	OTHER				
71.	R moved; R transferred schools	3	1		
73.	R could get diploma some other way (night school; state exam.)	1		1	
74.	R disliked the grading system		1		
75.	R never returned after suspension		1	1	
	SUBTOTALS:	4	3	2	
98.	Don't know; Not ascertained	2	1		
99.	No further mention		60	170	204
	SUBTOTALS:	2	61	170	204

Table 1

SUMMARY

REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT
OF HIGH SCHOOL

Supercategory	Percentage Frequencies			
	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.	4th Ment.
Family Reasons	10.6%	4.8%	1.9%	
Friends Reasons	8.7%	1.9%	1.0%	
Personal Reasons	2.4%	5.3%	3.4%	.5%
Work and Financial Reasons	11.6%	7.2%	1.0%	
School Reasons	31.9%	16.9%	5.3%	.5%
Authority Reasons	31.9%	32.9%	4.3%	.5%
Other Reasons	1.9%	1.4%	1.0%	
Don't Know; Not Ascertained; No Further Mention	1.0%	29.5%	82.1%	98.5%

Looking first at the seven supercategories in Table 1, the relatively high proportions of "School Reasons" (32%) and "Authority Reasons" (32%) as first responses to the question "How did you happen to leave school?" become immediately apparent. Nearly two-thirds of the dropouts in our sample mentioned one of these types of reasons as his first answer to question F2. And it is notable too that the majority of the subcategories under the heading of "Authority Reasons" pertain to school authorities. In other words, these early findings on a small group of subjects indicate that aspects of the school or of the authorities in the school are viewed by most dropouts as important conditions leading to their decision to leave the high school environment. It should be noted that among the individual subcategories under the heading "Authority Reasons", category 68 has the highest frequency. And a high proportion of this frequency is made up of young men who did not <u>choose</u> to leave school, but were in fact forced to leave. (In other words, for these young men an aspect of the school or school personnel did not <u>lead</u> to a decision; rather, the school personnel <u>made</u> the decision.) It would be a mistake, however, to assume that <u>all</u> young men whose responses were coded 68 in fact made no decision on their own. One respondent said, "I was suspended for about two weeks and decided not to go back." In answer to the direct question about when he started thinking of leaving school, this same boy said "After I was suspended." It seems, then, that some young men can get a taste of freedom when suspended, and will as a result decide to drop out permanently. (The actions of the school personnel <u>do</u>, for such a young man, <u>lead</u> to a personal decision to drop out.)

The frequencies under the heading "Personal Reasons" are consistently low. This may of course imply that such types of reasons do not cause a student to drop out of school. On the other hand, it seems quite feasible that the low frequencies here indicate a hesitancy on the part of young men to mention such types of reasons. Quoting from one of our respondents again, one young man said, when asked why he dropped out, "It was personal and I'd rather not say any more." It is certainly understandable that the delicate nature of the subject being investigated here could result in such types of answers. Personal considerations may be more related to dropout behavior than what our frequencies indicate.

Since coding requirements necessarily result in the loss of some of the "tone" of a personal interview, we have decided to include verbatim answers from a few respondents. The following are typical responses to question F2:

> "I didn't enjoy school and felt I wasn't getting any benefit from it. This was a stronger urge than to stay and finish high school."
>
> "Well, I talked with my counselor and he'd tell me all the courses I needed to take. Okay. I'd try to sign up for them. I couldn't ever get all of them he recommended. So I just decided I'd drop out and take correspondence courses. Then I'd get the ones I really wanted."
>
> "I left -- I figured it would be better to try being out of school until I got my fill of it and then go back."
>
> "I thought I was wasting teachers' time, my time. I didn't know what I wanted to do. Experience is the best teacher."

"I wanted to get a transfer since I didn't like this school. I didn't like automotive trades. I couldn't get a transfer, so I quit."

"I was just bull-headed and dropped out. I had a brother that quit and I thought I was as big as he was."

"At the time I had trouble -- I was skipping school -- I missed too much. I had worries mainly about my Dad and one day I was told that I had better leave. By leaving in May I lost all the credits for that semester so I was mad and didn't go back in the Fall."

Time of Dropping Out

The first specific bit of information sought from our respondents was the date on which they dropped out of high school. The response distributions appear in Table 2 (by four month periods).[4]

Table 2

TIME OF DROPPING OUT

F3. When did you leave school?

		Frequency
1.	September, 1966 - December, 1966 or earlier	32
2.	January, 1967 - April, 1967	33
3.	May, 1967 - August, 1967	18
4.	September, 1967 - December 1967	62
5.	January, 1968 - April, 1968	42
6.	May, 1968 - August, 1968	5
9.	Don't know; Not Ascertained	15

The greatest number of dropouts interviewed in the Spring of 1968 had dropped out sometime during the preceding Fall (September - December of 1967). This time period includes the first semester of eleventh grade for the subjects on our panel.

Dropping Out by Choice versus Dropping Out Because Asked To

There is of course an important distinction between dropping out of school by choice and being asked to leave by some school authority. And it is this very distinction that we sought to make in the next question in the

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[4]This information was also coded by months. Response distributions for this coding appear in Appendix B.

dropout segment of the interview. The responses to this question provide us with the exact numbers of respondents who left by choice and who were asked to leave, and also make possible later analyses controlling on this critical dimension. [In addition, the answers to question F4,5 (see Table 3) determined the way in which other interview questions about the dropping out experience were worded. Thus the question was intentionally asked at this early point in the interview, and according to answers to this item respondents were divided into two separate groups for the next sequence of questions.]

Table 3

DID R DROP OUT BY CHOICE
OR WAS HE ASKED TO LEAVE?

F4,5. Did you leave school by choice or were you asked to leave (by some school authority)?

	Frequency	Percentage of Dropout Sample
1. Left school by choice	130	62.8%
2. Asked to leave	74	35.7%
9. Not ascertained	3	1.4%

Once our respondents could be separated into those who had left school by choice and those who had been asked to leave by some school authority, we asked them appropriately-worded questions about other details of their dropout experience. Interviewers were instructed to ask only those specific questions for which answers had not already been learned from the response to the open-ended item (F2) at the beginning of the section. (If the interviewer already knew the answer from the previous response, she was instructed to fill it in without asking the question again.)

Some items of the next section of the interview (specifically items F4a-F4f), then, were appropriate only for the group of respondents (N=130) who left high school by choice. The "a" columns of Tables 4 and 6 - 12 indicate the response distributions on this set of questions. And other items of the section (specifically F5a-F5e) applied only to respondents who were asked to leave by some school authority. (The response distributions for this set of comparable items are in the "b" columns of Tables 4 and 6 - 12.) The "c" columns of Tables 4 and 6 - 12 present combined (left by choice plus asked to leave boys) response distributions.

Time Spent Thinking About Dropping Out

One bit of information sought from respondents was the time when they first started thinking about dropping out. The response distributions for boys who left by choice appear in the first ("a") column of Table 4. For respondents who had been asked to leave school, we first asked whether or not

they had been thinking about leaving anyway (see Table 5) and those who answered "yes" to this question were then asked when they first started thinking about it (second, or "b", column of Table 4). The third ("c") column of Table 4 indicates the combined response distributions.[5]

Table 4

WHEN R STARTED THINKING ABOUT LEAVING SCHOOL

F4a,F5d. When did you first start thinking about leaving school?

		(a) Rs WHO LEFT SCHOOL BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE[6]	(c) TOTAL
11.	Elementary school	2		2
24.	7th Grade	3		3
34.	8th Grade	2		2
44.	9th Grade	8		8
47.	Summer after 9th grade	1		1
51.	First semester 10th grade	14	2	16
54.	Second semester 10th grade	19	1	20
57.	Summer after 10th grade	3		3
61.	First semester 11th grade	27		27
64.	Second semester 11th grade	13	1	14
67.	Summer after 11th grade	1		1
91.	Never thought about it beforehand; dropped out on impulse	18		18
98.	Don't know; Not ascertained	22	2	24
99.	Inappropriate	74	201	68

Table 5

HAD R BEEN THINKING OF LEAVING BEFORE HE WAS ASKED

F5d. Before you were asked to leave, had you yourself been thinking about leaving school? (N=74)

1.	Yes	6
5.	No	59
8.	Don't know	9
9.	Inappropriate	133

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5 This information was coded in a one-column version also. The response distributions for this coding appear in Appendix B.

6 Note (Table 5) N for which this question was applicable.

The response distributions in the first column of Table 4 show that most of the young men who left school by choice started thinking about leaving either late in tenth grade or early in eleventh grade. It is interesting to note the rather high number of boys (18) who said that they had not thought about dropping out at all beforehand, but had in fact dropped out on impulse.

The frequencies in Table 5 indicate that the large majority of the boys who were asked to leave had not been thinking about leaving by their own volition.

The response distributions for the entire sample appear in the third column of Table 4 above. The distributions are of course almost identical to those in the first columns since the sample size in the second column is so small.

Using the information from item F3 (Table 2) and from item F4a (if R left by choice) or from the second part of item F5d (if R was asked to leave), the calculation was made to determine the period of time between when the respondent started thinking about dropping out (F4a or F5d) and when he actually left school. The frequency distributions for this calculation appear in Table 6.

Table 6

TIME BETWEEN THINKING OF DROPPING OUT AND ACTUALLY DROPPING OUT

	(a) Rs WHO LEFT SCHOOL BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
1. One month or less	66	1	67
2. About 3 months	13	3	16
3. About 6 months	15	1	16
4. About 1 year	5		5
5. About 1 1/2 years	3		3
6. About 2 years	4		4
8. 4 or more years	3		3
9. Don't know; Not ascertained; Inappropriate	98	202	93

The response distributions for questions F3, F4a, and F5d make it obvious that most of the young men in the sample did not think about dropping out of school for very long before they did it. And this is exactly what the above table shows: two thirds of those who left school report having thought about it for less than one month. (It should be noted that the high frequency of missing data occurred because if either bit of data--when R dropped out or when R started thinking about dropping out--was missing, the calculation for this question could not be made.)

Reasons for Dropping Out: Direct Probe

The next question in this series about the circumstances under which the respondent left school asked for the reasons why he chose to leave or was asked to leave. This item was intended as somewhat of a probe -- the information sought is obviously very similar to that sought in the original open-ended item (F2). It was thought likely, however, that answers to this item might expand or clarify the earlier responses.

Table 7

REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

F4b. What were your reasons for choosing to leave school? (Rs who chose to leave)

F5a. For what reasons were you asked to leave school: (Rs who were asked to leave)

	(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
FAMILY			
15. Problems at home; R was needed at home (other than financial)	1		1
16. R was ill	1		1
SUBTOTAL:	2		2
FRIENDS			
21. R had no friends at school; R's friends all graduated, dropped out, or changed schools	3		3
25. R got into some specific trouble with students in school	1		1
SUBTOTAL:	4		4
PERSONAL REASONS			
32. R felt grown up; R felt he was a big shot; R thought it was smart to drop out	1		1
33. R preferred to be doing other things (except work)	2		2
39. Other personal reasons	1		1
SUBTOTAL:	4		4
WORK AND FINANCIAL			
41. R had to go to work; R needed money	2		2
42. R wanted to work; R more interested in work than in school; R preferred to be out working	7		7
43. R wanted to be working in order to earn money	6		6
44. R wanted to be working in order to earn money for a car or motorcycle	1		1
45. R dropped out in order to enlist in the armed forces	1		1

Table 7 cont.

		(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
47.	R felt he would get better (more useful) training on-the-job; R wanted to learn a trade	1		1
	SUBTOTAL:	18		18
SCHOOL REASONS				
50.	R had trouble learning; R got too many poor grades; R got behind in school work	5	1	6
51.	Non-promotion; R got left back a grade	1		1
52.	R felt school didn't teach anything valuable; R felt school was not useful	3		3
54.	R couldn't take the classes he wanted; R couldn't go to the school he wanted	2		2
55.	R didn't study; R was too lazy to do his school work	1	1	2
56.	"Didn't like school in general"; R not interested in school; R found school boring	10		10
58.	R was absent too much; R played "hooky"; R cut classes	4	2	6
	SUBTOTAL:	26	4	30
AUTHORITY				
60.	R got in trouble with teachers, administrators, or counselors	1	1	2
62.	R couldn't get along with teachers; R disliked the teachers	5		5
64.	R got blamed for things he didn't do	1		1
65.	R thought that if he didn't drop out they would have kicked him out	1		1
66.	Authorities were too strict; school rules were too strict	1		1
67.	R got in trouble with the law or other out-of-school authorities	1		1
	SUBTOTAL:	10	1	11
OTHER				
71.	R moved; R transferred schools	1		1
75.	R never returned after suspension		1	1
	SUBTOTAL:	1	1	2
98.	Don't know; Not ascertained	1	3	4
99.	No further mention; inappropriate	141	198	132
	SUBTOTAL:	142	201	136

Table 7

SUMMARY

REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT
OF HIGH SCHOOL

Supercategory	Percentage Frequencies		
	Respondents Who Left By Choice	Respondents Who Were Asked to Leave	Total
Family Reasons	1%		1%
Friends Reasons	1.9%		1.9%
Personal Reasons	1.9%		1.9%
Work and Financial Reasons	8.7%		8.7%
School Reasons	12.6%	1.9%	14.5%
Authority Reasons	4.8%	.5%	5.3%
Other Reasons	.5%	.5%	1.0%
Don't Know; Not Ascertained; No Further Mention	68.6%	97.1%	65.7%

It is clear from the response frequencies in Table 7 that in fact this direct question added relatively little information; for the most part, respondents mentioned all the reasons surrounding their dropping out in response to question F2. Less than half of the total number of dropouts gave an additional new response here. (Only the frequency distributions for additional first mentions are presented in Table 7, since there were only 19 codeable second mentions and 3 codeable third mentions.) A coding convention which was used in the recording of responses to questions F4b and F5a should be mentioned here: a response to one of these items which had already been picked up in the coding of question F2 was <u>not</u> coded again even though it might have been repeated by the respondent. (Exactly the same codes were used for recording information from questions F4b and F5a as were used for recording information from question F2; Table 7 presents <u>only</u> those categories in which there were one or more mentions.)

Intentions to Return to School

For all respondents who were current dropouts at the time of our interview (i.e., former dropouts were not asked this question), we inquired about their intentions to return. The response distributions on this item are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

INTENTIONS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

F4c,F5e. Do you think you might ever return to school?

	(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
1. Yes[7]	49	9	58
5. No	39	3	42
8. Don't know; Not Ascertained	4	2	6
9. Inappropriate; R is a former dropout	115	193	101

For the respondents (58) who answered "yes" to the question about whether they thought they would ever return to school, we then asked why they thought they would return and when they might return (coded in two different ways). The results from these questions appear in Tables 9, 10, and 10(II).

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[7] <u>Only</u> those respondents who answered "yes" here were asked the questions for which response distributions are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9

WHY R MIGHT RETURN TO SCHOOL

F4c, F5e. Why do you think you might return?

		(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
	GENERAL			
11.	To finish my education (unspecified further)	16	3	19
	FINANCIAL OR JOB RELATED			
21.	More education will enable me to get a better job	5		5
23.	Have earned the money I needed; No longer need to work	1		1
24.	To learn a trade	2	2	4
	SUBTOTAL:	8	2	10
	ATTITUDE			
31.	Am bored doing what I am now doing; have decided I am interested in school; would like school better now	3	1	4
32.	Have decided school is useful, valuable	4	1	5
34.	Want to graduate and go to college; want to graduate	4	2	6
38.	Have changed my attitude (unspecified further)	1		1
	SUBTOTAL:	12	4	16
	EVENTS, CIRCUMSTANCES			
47.	I have new friends who are in school	1		1
49.	Other events or circumstances	1		1
	SUBTOTAL:	2		2
97.	Don't know; Not ascertained	12	1	13
99.	Inappropriate	157	197	147
	SUBTOTAL:	169	198	160

Table 10

WHEN R MIGHT RETURN TO SCHOOL

F4c,F5e. When might you return?

	(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
6. May - August, 1968		2	2
7. September - December, 1968	29	3	32
8. January - April, 1969	4	2	6
9. Don't know; Not ascertained; Inappropriate	174	200	167

Table 10 (II)

WHEN R MIGHT RETURN TO SCHOOL

F4c,F5e. When might you return?

	(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
1. In the service; when I get out of the service	7	1	8
2. When my family doesn't need me at home anymore	1		1
5. When specific conditions change; when the next school term begins	33	7	40
6. "Later"; I have no idea; my plans are vague	7	1	8
9. Inappropriate	159	198	150

The sample sizes for these items make the response distributions of questionable value. However, these data are useful as possible indications of the directions in which we can expect responses to distribute when we have a larger number of dropouts.

Encouragement to Leave School

The next question we asked about a respondent's dropout experience was whether or not any school official had urged him to leave school. The comparable question for respondents who were asked to leave was "Who asked you to leave school?" The response distributions for these items appear in Table 11.

Table 11

ENCOURAGEMENT TO
LEAVE SCHOOL

F4d. Did any school official urge you to drop out of school? (Rs who left by choice)

F5b. Who asked you to leave school? (Rs who were asked to leave)

		(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
1.	Teacher	3		3
2.	Counselor	2	2	4
3.	Principal	6	28	34
4.	Assistant principal, vice-principal, dean	2	34	36
5.	Other school person		2	2
6.	Other non-school person		2	2
7.	No one urged me to drop out	111		111
8.	Don't know; Not ascertained	7	7	14
9.	Inappropriate	76	132	1

The most striking finding indicated in this table is that all but 13 of the boys who left school by choice said that no one had urged them to leave. It appears that a choice to drop out of school is in most cases an independent one -- one reached by the dropout alone. For young men who had been asked to leave, in most cases the principal or vice-principal handled this duty of expelling the student.

Encouragement to Remain in School

Our next aim was that of getting information about the forces trying to get the respondent to stay in school. The response distributions for comparable items for respondents who left by choice and respondents who were asked to leave appear in Table 12.

Table 12

ENCOURAGEMENT TO REMAIN
IN SCHOOL

F4e. Did any school official urge you to remain in school? (Rs who left by choice)

F5c. Did anyone try to let you stay in school? (Rs who were asked to leave)

		(a) Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	(b) Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	(c) TOTAL
1.	Teacher	18	4	22
2.	Counselor	31	4	35
3.	Principal	14	2	16
4.	Assistant principal, vice-principal, dean	4	1	5
5.	Other school person	10		10
6.	Other non-school person		6	6
7.	No one urged me to stay in or helped me stay in	45	51	96
8.	Don't know; Not ascertained	9	7	16
9.	Inappropriate	76	132	1

The response distributions for this question are obviously quite different from the distributions of answers in the preceding question (Table 11). And briefly comparing the two distributions might be profitable. Only about one-third of the boys who left school by choice said that no one urged them to stay in -- the remaining two-thirds said that a counselor, teacher, principal, or other school person had indeed encouraged them to remain in school. Compared with the responses to the question about being urged to drop out of school, these frequencies are very (and expectedly) different. Apparently the decision to drop out of school is one which school personnel usually try to discourage, but since the decision is for the most part an independently-reached one -- as we have seen in Table 11 -- this attempt to dissuade a student from leaving school is not always successful. (After all, almost two-thirds of the dropouts were urged by a school official not to leave school, but did anyway.)

Among the respondents who are out of school because they were asked to leave by some school authority, very few (a total of 17) mention someone trying to make it possible for them to stay. It seems that for the most part, the decision to ask a student to leave school (apparently a decision made by the principal or vice-principal) is not tampered with by other personnel.

"Push-Out"

The final question in this section about the circumstances surrounding the respondent's dropping out of school applied only to those who left by choice. (There was no comparable item for respondents who were asked to leave.) Our intention was in fact to determine how many of our respondents felt that they would have been in the "asked to leave" group if they had not chosen to leave. The response distributions for these items which touch on the issue of "push-out" are presented in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13

DID R FEEL "PUSHED-OUT"?

F4f. If you had not left school by choice when you did, do you think someone would have asked you to leave?

		Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE
1.	Yes	18
5.	No	103
8.	Don't know	10
9.	Inappropriate	76

Table 14

BY WHOM DID R FEEL "PUSHED-OUT"?

F4f. Who (would have asked you to leave)?

		Rs WHO FELT "PUSHED-OUT"
1.	Teacher	2
2.	Counselor	2
3.	Principal	11
4.	Ass't. Principal, Vice-Principal, or Dean	2
5.	Other school person	2
8.	Don't know	4
9.	Inappropriate	184

That the majority of young men who dropped out of school by choice answered "no" to this question (Table 13) is not surprising. However, that as many as 18 boys (almost 14% of those who left by choice) would answer "yes" is surprising. The initial reaction to these data is that the possibility of expulsion can be a cause of a decision to leave school. And this sort of causal relationship may in fact hold true in some cases; there may be such a thing as a "push-out" in American schools. We must note, however, that in the initial open-ended question (F2) of this dropout section of the interview, only 8 responses were coded under the category (#65) "R thought that

if he didn't drop out they would have kicked him out." This discrepancy indicates something about the differences between an open-ended item and a direct question, and leads to speculation as to whether a direct question sometimes "cues" a respondent to say something he had not really considered beforehand. The eight young men who offered (in response to F2) as a reason for dropping out that they felt they would be asked to leave seem to be the most likely representatives of genuine "push-out." This is not to say that the other young men are necessarily being dishonest in their answers -- it is merely to say that more significance can be given to the answer in response to the open-ended item because there was no possibility of a "cue."

At this point in our interview sequence, the respondents were separated into two groups on the basis of whether or not they were presently out of school (in Spring of 1968, when interviews were taken). Again, the rationale for the separation was that of making it possible to word items appropriately, and yet comparably, for either current or former dropouts.

Current Dropouts vs. Former Dropouts

The exact numbers of respondents who fell into each of the groupings (i.e., current dropouts and former dropouts) is reported in Table 15. It can be noted that the former dropout grouping has been broken down according to the length of time the respondent was out of school. We felt this to be an important distinction to be made for purposes of future analyses; it seems likely that the young man who was out of school for only a few days (often a case of temporary suspension) would have a quite different reaction to this experience than would a boy who dropped out for some longer duration.

Table 15

IS R A CURRENT DROPOUT OR A FORMER DROPOUT?

	frequency	% of dropout sample
1. Present Dropout	106	51.2%
2. Former Dropout of a Month or More	31	15.0%
3. Former Dropout of One Week to One Month	26	12.6%
4. Former Dropout of One Week or Less	44	21.3%

Various People's Reactions to Respondent's Dropping-Out

The next set of questions inquired about various people's reactions to the fact that the respondent was out of school. The first item asked about the respondent's father's feelings. Response distributions are presented in Table 16. Response distributions for questions about the reactions of the respondent's mother, siblings, and friends appear in Tables 17, 18, and 19 respectively.

Table 16

R'S FATHER'S FEELINGS

F6,F12. How does (did) your father feel about your being out of school?

		PRESENT DROPOUTS	FORMER DROPOUTS	TOTAL
1.	Feels happy about it; likes it; it's what he wanted me to do	5	2	7
2.	Doesn't care; doesn't feel bad about it; doesn't mind	17	9	26
3.	Feels unhappy about it; doesn't like it; didn't want me to drop out	64	65	129
7.	"Says it's up to me"	3	1	4
8.	Don't know; Not ascertained	6	17	23
9.	Inappropriate	112	108	16

Table 17

R'S MOTHER'S FEELINGS

F7,F13. How does (did) your mother feel about your being out of school?

		PRESENT DROPOUTS	FORMER DROPOUTS	TOTAL
1.	Feels happy about it; likes it; it's what she wanted me to do	6		6
2.	Doesn't care; doesn't feel bad about it; doesn't mind	15	10	25
3.	Feels unhappy about it; doesn't like it; didn't want me to drop out	77	72	149
7.	"Says it's up to me"	5		5
8.	Don't know; not ascertained	2	17	19
9.	Inappropriate	102	108	3

Table 18

R'S SIBLINGS' FEELINGS

F8,F14. If you have any brothers or sisters, how do they feel about your being out of school?

		PRESENT DROPOUTS	FORMER DROPOUTS	TOTAL
1.	Feels happy about it; likes it; it's what he wanted me to do	6	1	7
2.	Doesn't care; doesn't feel bad about it; doesn't mind	32	38	70
3.	Feels unhappy about it; doesn't like it; didn't want me to drop out	42	33	75
6.	Variation of feelings among siblings	8		8
8.	Don't know; not ascertained	13	26	39
9.	Inappropriate	106	109	8

Table 19

R'S FRIENDS' FEELINGS

F9,F15. How do your friends feel about your being out of school?

		PRESENT DROPOUTS	FORMER DROPOUTS	TOTAL
1.	Feels happy about it; likes it; it's what he wanted me to do	6	3	9
2.	Doesn't care; doesn't feel bad about it; doesn't mind	39	38	77
3.	Feels unhappy about it; doesn't like it; didn't want me to drop out	33	31	64
6.	Variation of feelings among friends	13	6	19
7.	"Says it's up to me"	5		5
8.	Don't know; not ascertained	10	22	32
9.	Inappropriate	101	107	1

The findings here are not at all surprising: the overwhelming number of dropouts say that their father and mother feel unhappy about the fact that they are not in school (or, in the case of former dropouts, felt unhappy when they were not in school). The dropouts report that their siblings and friends did not dislike the idea of dropping out as much as did their parents, but very few dropouts said that people in either of these categories actually thought it was a good idea. In general, dropouts do not seem to feel supported in their decision by the people around them.

"Pressure" to Return and Its Impact

Our next interest was in whether or not the dropout felt pressure from people around him to return to school. And, in the case of former dropouts, we wanted to know how much influence these people in fact had had on his decision to return. The data are presented in Tables 20, 21, and 22 below:

Table 20

"PRESSURE" TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

F10. Are any people trying to get you to go back to school? (Present Dropouts)
F16. Did any of these people try to get you to go back to school? (Former Dropouts)

	PRESENT DROPOUTS	FORMER DROPOUTS	TOTAL
1. Yes	62	52	114
5. No	44	31	75
8. Don't know; Not ascertained		17	17
9. Inappropriate	101	107	1

Table 21

WHO IS TRYING (TRIED) TO GET R TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

	PRESENT DROPOUTS		FORMER DROPOUTS		TOTAL	
	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.
1. Father	12	10	15	10	27	20
2. Mother	25	15	17	11	42	26
3. Brother(s) and/or Sister(s)	3	3	3	2	6	5
4. Friends	12	4	8	4	20	8
5. Other relative	1	1			1	1
6. Everyone; all of them	8	1	7		15	1
7. Other non-relative	1		1		2	0

Table 21, cont.

	PRESENT DROPOUTS		FORMER DROPOUTS		TOTAL	
	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	1st Ment.	2nd Ment.
8. Don't know; Not ascertained			9	9	9	9
9. Inappropriate; No further mention	145	173	147	171	85	137

Table 22

IMPORTANCE OF "PRESSURE" TO RETURN
(FORMER DROPOUTS ONLY)

F16a. How important was this influence?

	frequency
1. Not at all important; I was going to return anyway; I made up my own mind	22
3. Somewhat important; made some difference in my decision; I may not have returned without their encouragement	11
5. Very important; I would not have returned to school without their encouragement	17
8. Dont know; Not ascertained	12
9. Inappropriate	145

Since we saw in Tables 16 through 19 that most people were not happy with the dropout's decision to leave school, it follows that a great number of them would try to get the dropout to return. Table 20 clearly demonstrates that this is the case. Both present dropouts and former dropouts in our sample felt that they were being encouraged to return to school. And for the most part, this pressure was reported by the dropouts as coming from their parents (see Table 21). This "fits" with the finding that parents were the ones whom dropouts reported as being the most dissatisfied.

Regardless of all this "role-sending", however, more former dropouts said that this influence was not very important in their decision to return to school than said that the influence was very important (see Table 22). This finding perhaps relates to the indication in Table 11 that the decision to drop out of high school is an independent one . . . the decision to return may often be reached independently too.

Current Dropouts' Job Plans

The next set of items referred to the respondent's immediate job plans and was appropriate only for young men who were out of school at the time of the Spring 1968 data collection (i.e., current dropouts). All other respondents were asked for this sort of information in another section of the interview. Our intention was to find out the details of a dropout's plans for employment in the near future (to be distinguished in many cases from his long-range career plans). The response distributions on these items are presented in Tables 23, 24, and 25.

Table 23

CURRENT DROPOUTS' JOB PLANS

F11. Do you expect to have a job during the next year or so?

		frequency
1.	Yes, a new job	51
3.	Yes, the same job I now have	48
5.	No	5
8.	Don't know; Not ascertained	2
9.	Inappropriate	101

Table 24

ATTEMPTS TO GET A JOB

(If expecting a new job)

F11b. What kinds of things have you been doing to try to get this sort of a job?[8]

		frequency		
		1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.
1.	Getting help from parents	1		
2.	Getting help from other relatives	1		1
3.	Getting help from friends or neighbors	7		
4.	Getting help from someone in school			
5.	Looking for advertisements; placing advertisements in papers, etc.	2	2	
6.	Making applications (employers, etc.); "asking around"; looking by myself; making applications with employment agencies	16	10	2
7.	Other	14	3	1
8.	Waiting for someone to ask me to take a job	1		
9.	Inappropriate	165	192	203

8 This information was coded in a two-column version also. Response distributions for this coding appear in Appendix B.

Table 25

TIME SPENT LOOKING FOR A JOB

F11b. How long have you been doing these things?		frequency		
		1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.
1.	Just a few days	4	1	
2.	A few weeks; several weeks	11	7	3
3.	A few months; months; many months	8	3	1
4.	Years	2		
8.	Don't know; not ascertained	20	10	8
9.	Inappropriate	162	186	195

It is obvious that these data will become more significant when they are analyzed in conjunction with similar data about the immediate job plans (after school jobs, summer jobs, etc.) of young men in school. (Such an analysis is beyond the intended scope of this Working Paper.) But a few interesting findings reveal themselves in these data alone. For one thing, Table 23 indicates that most dropouts do in fact have plans for a job of some sort. As far as how these dropouts intend to get a job, a plurality of them count on experience and non-school training. It seems, in other words, that most of the dropouts are very realistic in their immediate employment aspirations.

Chapter III:

General Conclusions

An overall reaction to the descriptive statistics reported in this Working Paper is that they are generally not very surprising. Most of the findings from the sample of dropouts seem to confirm somewhat "expected" trends. Among the more straightforward results are: the decision to drop out of high school is usually reached independently and is not thought about for very long in advance; a goodly number of dropouts have plans to finish their schooling someday; dropouts do not often feel supported in their behavior by their parents, siblings, friends, etc.; and most dropouts seem to have specific plans for doing something else while they are not attending school. All of these conclusions are supported by the responses of the 207 young men in our panel who have been through the process of leaving school for one reason or another.

There are perhaps two instances where our findings were <u>not</u> so straightforward. One involves the reasons why boys leave high school. It seems very significant that aspects of the school environment itself -- <u>not</u> matters of personal or family circumstances -- are most often mentioned in response to the question about why a young man left school. This finding is significant partly because it is a bit "unexpected", but more importantly because the implication is that improvements in school policies and procedures <u>can</u> perhaps have a beneficial effect upon dropout rates. (In later studies of school organizational characteristics, we will explore this issue directly.)

A second interesting finding is somewhat related to the one above, and was commented upon quite extensively earlier. This is the finding that about one-third of the dropouts who left school by choice were not urged to reconsider by a school official, and that two-thirds of the dropouts who were asked to leave said that no one tried to make it possible for them to stay. This writer was surprised by this reported lack of encouragement from school officials to try working "within the system." It should be borne in mind, of course, that if the majority of those who dropped out spent less than a month thinking about it and reached the decision to leave on their own, then it is conceivable that few (if any) school personnel knew they were going to quit. And too, for those dropouts who were asked to leave, there may often have been no reasonable cause for any school official to interfere in the expulsion decision (many of the "asked to leave dropouts" fall into the "former dropout" category because of temporary expulsion). Thus, encouragement to remain in school may sometimes be impossible, unnecessary, or ineffective; nevertheless, the implication remains that dropout behavior might be favorably affected by changes in policy and attitudes of school officials.

Univariate response distributions -- such as those presented in this Working Paper -- are of course the most preliminary of analyses. Only when these data are related to the many other variables in our study -- when the attitudes, values, backgrounds, etc. of these dropouts are compared with those of boys who are still in school -- will we be able to better explain the meaning of the dropout experience and the factors which lead a young man to become a high school dropout.

But as a description of the actual circumstances surrounding the dropping-out process, these data -- even in this simplist of forms -- are valuable. One might say that we have the story as told by the dropout himself. The tale is far from complete, but it is a step in the direction of understanding why and how young men drop out of high school.

APPENDIX A

REPLICA OF DROPOUT SEGMENT OF INTERVIEW

F2. How did you happen to leave school? _____

_____

_____

F2a. (PROBE IF NECESSARY) Can you tell me more about that? _____

_____

INTERVIEWER: THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IS DESIGNED TO FILL OUT THE GENERAL PICTURE PROVIDED ABOVE. GO THROUGH THE ENTIRE SEQUENCE:
(1) FOR SOME QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ABLE TO FILL IN THE ANSWER FROM WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY LEARNED WITHOUT HAVING TO ASK THE QUESTION AGAIN
(2) ASK EACH OF THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY LEARNED THE ANSWER

24

F3. When did you leave school? _____(month) _____(year)

F4,5 Did you leave school by choice or were you asked to leave (by some school authority)? _____

_____

F4. LEFT BY CHOICE ( )

a. When did you first start thinking about leaving school?

_____

_____

b. What were your reasons for choosing to leave school?
PROBE ONCE: Any other reasons?

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____

c. (DO NOT ASK FOR FORMER DROPOUTS) Do you think you might ever return to school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: Why do you think you might return? _____

When might you return?

_____

d. Did any school official urge you to drop out of school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: What official?

_____

e. Did any school official urge you to stay in school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: What official?

_____

f. If you had not left school by choice when you did, do you think someone would have asked you to leave?

( ) NO
( ) YES: Who? _____

SKIP TO TOP OF NEXT PAGE, pg.25

F5. ASKED TO LEAVE ( )

a. For what reasons were you asked to leave school? PROBE ONCE: Any other reasons?

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____

b. Who (that is, what school official) asked you to leave school?

_____

c. Did anyone try to let you stay in school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: Who? _____

d. Before you were asked to leave, had you yourself been thinking about leaving school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: When did you first start thinking about it?

_____

e. (DO NOT ASK FOR FORMER DROPOUTS) Do you think you might ever return to school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: Why do you think you might return? _____

_____

When might you return?

_____

( ) R IS NOT PRESENTLY IN SCHOOL (WHETHER ASKED TO LEAVE OR LEFT BY CHOICE): CONTINUE WITH QUESTIONS F6 - F11c.

( ) R IS BACK IN SCHOOL NOW (THAT IS, R IS A FORMER DROPOUT) : SKIP TO QUESTIONS F12 - F17, PAGE 26.

Now I'd like to know how people you know feel about your being out of school.

F6. How does your father feel about it (your being out of school)?

_____

_____

F7. How does your mother feel about your being out of school?

_____

_____

F8. If you have any brothers or sisters, how do they feel about your being out of school?
( ) R HAS NO BROTHERS OR SISTERS

_____

_____

F9. How do your friends feel about your being out of school?

_____

_____

F10. Are any of these people trying to get you to go back to school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: Which ones? _____

F11. Do you expect to have a job (SPECIFY FOR R's WHO NOW HAVE JOBS: either the one you have now or a different one) during the next year or so?

( ) NO - SKIP TO QUESTION F18, PAGE 28
( ) YES, the same job I now have - SKIP TO QUESTION F18, PAGE 28
( ) YES, a new job

F11a. Can you tell me what sort of job it might be?

_____

_____

26

F11b. What kinds of things have you been doing to try to get this kind of a job?

_____

_____

(PROBE, IF NOT ALREADY ASCERTAINED) how long have you been doing these things?

_____

F11c. Are there any (other) things you plan to do to get this kind of a job?

_____

_____

SKIP TO QUESTION F18, pg. 28

Now I'd like to know how people you know felt about your being out of school when you were. (APPLY ONLY TO FORMER DROPOUTS)

F12. How did your father feel about your being out of school?

_____

_____

F13. How did your mother feel about your being out of school?

_____

_____

F14. If you have any brothers or sisters, how did they feel about your being out of school?
( ) R has no brothers or sisters

_____

_____

F15. How did your friends feel about your being out of school?

_____

_____

F16. Did any of these people try to get you to go back to school?

( ) NO
( ) YES: Which ones? _____

F16a. How important was this in your decision to return to school?

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

ALTERNATE VERSIONS OF TABLES 2, 4, and 24

Table 2

WHEN R LEFT SCHOOL
(TWO-COLUMN VERSION)

F3. When did you leave school?

		frequency
01.	November, 1965 or earlier	11
02.	December, 1965	
03.	January, 1966	3
04.	February, 1966	
05.	March, 1966	
06.	April, 1966	1
07.	May, 1966	
08.	June, 1966	
09.	July, 1966	
10.	August, 1966	
11.	September, 1966	
12.	October, 1966	2
13.	November, 1966	4
14.	December, 1966	8
15.	January, 1967	13
16.	February, 1967	8
17.	March, 1967	3
18.	April, 1967	8
19.	May, 1967	11
20.	June, 1967	6
21.	July, 1967	1
22.	August, 1967	
23.	September, 1967	16
24.	October, 1967	18
25.	November, 1967	12
26.	December, 1967	16
27.	January, 1968	15
28.	February, 1968	14
29.	March, 1968	7
30.	April, 1968	6
31.	May, 1968	3
32.	June, 1968	1
33.	July, 1968	1
98.	Don't know	1
99.	Not ascertained	18

APPENDIX B

Table 4

WHEN R STARTED THINKING
ABOUT LEAVING SCHOOL
(ONE-COLUMN VERSION)

F4a,F5d. When did you first start thinking about leaving school?

		Rs WHO LEFT BY CHOICE	Rs WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE	TOTAL
1.	Elementary school	2		2
2.	7th grade	3		3
3.	8th grade	2		2
4.	9th grade	9		9
5.	10th grade	36	3	39
6.	11th grade	41	2	43
8.	Don't know; not ascertained	37	4	41
9.	Inappropriate	77	198	68

Table 24

ATTEMPTS TO GET A JOB
(TWO-COLUMN VERSION)

F11b. What kinds of things have you been doing to try to get this sort of a job?

		frequency		
		1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.
EDUCATION				
11.	Finish high school			
12.	Train in high school			
13.	DCT or Co-op training			
14.	Business school/trade school	2	1	
15.	College			
16.	Post-graduate work			
19.	School--NA which of above			
	SUBTOTAL:	2	1	
EXPERIENCE AND NON-SCHOOL TRAINING				
20.	Apprenticeship			
21.	On-the-job training; internship	1		
22.	Work; get a job			1

APPENDIX B

Table 24, cont.

		frequency		
		1st Ment.	2nd Ment.	3rd Ment.
23.	Apply for job; check advertisements	12	6	
24.	Inquire about requirements and opportunities	3	2	
25.	Enlist; be in the service; drafted or NA whether draft or enlist	2		
26.	Training in Armed Forces			
27.	Peace Corps; Job Corps; Vista; Teacher Corps	2		1
29.	Practice; become good at it; gain experience	3	1	
	SUBTOTAL:	23	9	2
MISCELLANEOUS				
30.	Scouts will see me and draft me (as for ball-playing)			
31.	Pass exams; get license			
32.	Move to a particular part of the country (where work is available)	1	2	
33.	Make up my mind as to career choice			
34.	Professional placement service; state employment service	2	1	1
35.	Missionary or church work			
36.	I can have the job whenever I want	2		
37.	"Looking around"		2	
	SUBTOTAL:	5	5	1
CONTACTS				
50.	Meet the "right people"			
51.	Through relatives	1		1
52.	Through friends	3		
53.	Through others	2		
54.	Through people at school			
55.	Through people in the field	2		
	SUBTOTAL:	8		1
95.	"Nothing"	10	1	
98.	Don't know; Not ascertained	3	2	2
99.	Inappropriate; no further mention	156	189	201